

THEMESCENE

June 2012

In this issue we:

Look at the dark days of World War II

British Expeditionary Force in France

With Jim Etherington



Visit the greengrocer

Exotic fruits

With Neil Pearce



Review Stampex

**Spring Stampex: seminars
and competition results**



Consider the future of the BTA ... and of philately

And catch up with all the usual features



BRITISH THEMATIC ASSOCIATION

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EDITORIAL

Wendy Buckle

Spring Stampex proved quite a hit with visitors, with the “pictorial classes” exhibits attracting a lot of interest. It’s nice to see people constantly browsing round the frames and not just the dealers. A full report is on page 58. Congratulations to all those who entered the competitions, and in particular to gold medal winners Richard Wheeler, Peter Weir and Ron Backhouse in the Thematic class and Margaret Morris in the Postcard class. Richard Wheeler won best in show, and it is gratifying that all four are distinguished members of the BTA. The May edition of *Stamp and Coin Mart* had an interesting article on the increasing popularity of Open Class philately, based around entries at Spring Stampex. It’s just unfortunate that three of the four people quoted in the article were talking about their Thematic collections not Open, something not made clear in the article. For those who particularly enjoy Open and Postcard collecting can I recommend a fascinating book published by Thames & Hudson in 2000: *The Postcard Century: 2000 cards and their messages* by Tom Phillips. As the preface explains the author included “those [postcards] that have in their pictures or messages ... some special flavour of the time. High history vies with everyday pleasures and griefs, and there are glimpses of all kinds of lives and situations”. Every card is illustrated, and you can never get bored of dipping into the book.

This being the June issue of *Themescene* much space is devoted to the BTA AGM. Agenda and Accounts are on page 64 followed by a paper “Future of the BTA”. Please, please read this and let me or any other committee member know what you think. If you can make it to the AGM so much the better. It’s being held at Swinpex, which offers a fair of over 40 dealers, easy access and free parking. The AGM will be preceded by the presentation of the Francesca Rapkin Memorial Bowl to the 2012 winner Barry Stagg for his *Themescene* article “Passion and parachuting”. Many congratulations to him. Do you fancy putting an article together? It’s a handsome trophy to win.

In the March issue we introduced the Committee plans to hold a “BTA Fun With Philately Weekend” on 5th - 7th October. I’m pleased to say we have a good number of bookings already, but would welcome more. Page 78 gives the finalised programme and booking form, which you will see has plenty of speakers, plus plenty of chances for all attending to take part themselves. The evening programmes have been planned specifically with partners in mind, so not too philatelic. This is a great chance for members to meet and socialise in lovely surroundings.

I read the Chairman’s Page with interest. Like John, I find philatelic errors fascinating. Then by complete coincidence I was putting the “Handstamp Special” page together (page 72) and spotted a spelling error on one of the Titanic handstamps. It’s bad enough that the whole tragedy is being made to feel like a soap opera (I say this with feeling - my home town is Southampton, one of the worst affected by the sinking), they might at least get the remembrance commemoration right. But maybe I shouldn’t rant too much. We all make mistakes, and I need to rectify a mistake I made in the Editorial of the March issue. I congratulated Doonsfoot Primary School for winning the Stamp Active 2012 Trophy. Well I go that bit right but said their teacher is Lise Whittle. It isn’t, it’s David Rossall. Sorry David. Mea culpa.

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at our events this year. ☺

PRESIDENT'S PAGE

Wendy Buckle

What counts as a genuine stamp issue? Some years ago the UPU started a crusade against bogus and illegal issues from non-existent countries or from private printers purporting to issue genuine stamps. They regularly issued lists of such labels, an action wholeheartedly supported by the BTA. *Themescene* reprinted every list issued by the UPU but perhaps unfortunately these lists ceased in the 1990s. All that I can find on the UPU website these days are circulars, some of which do alert readers to new 'issues' - but you need to search the site quite diligently to find them. The practice of flooding the market with this stuff continues however, and now the Belgian auction/sales site Delcampe has announced that it will no longer allow to be listed:

- Labels bearing logos, illustrations, photographs belonging to third parties who have not given their approval ;
- Labels which seem to have been issued, illegally, by an existing place (country or region), whether or not this place issues postage stamps.

They are not banning cinderellas, or fantasy labels, providing they are clearly listed as such, but they are aiming the practice at the issue of so-called stamps of a country which have not been issued by that country's postal authorities. Such practice defrauds post offices (and small and poor countries) of income and misleads collectors. (*Delcampe Newsletter February 2012*).

So far, so good, and to be applauded. But this still leaves a grey area. Len Yandell, Editor of *Gabriel* (Guild of St. Gabriel), has drawn my attention to official issues of the Hellenic Post Philatelic Service (www.philotelismos.gr/) commemorating Agion Oros Athos (Mount Athos). The page explaining these issues is no longer on the site, but the original announcement said that "Hellenic Post in partnership with the Holy Community of Agion Oros will begin issuing sets of independent Agios Oros stamps". Four or five sets per year were planned, and all those issued to date are on sale via the Hellenic Post website. They are also on sale via Delcampe. There really seems to be no reason why these should not be treated as genuine stamps. However Michel has listed them, but Gibbons has declined to do so. (I don't know about Scott). Are they philatelically acceptable? Len described them as "extremely well produced but seemingly not generally available to the stamp buying public". We are both interested in knowing readers' views on this, please drop a line to *Themescene*.

This whole issue of general availability came to the surface again when I received a notice from our own Royal Mail telling me how excited they are that they are "going to celebrate the British Gold Medal winners with next day commemorative stamps that will be available at 500 post offices the following day". 500! Out of the 11,800 branches in the UK that hardly counts as generally available. (OK, you can buy them online as well). And much as I'll be willing our sports men and women to do well at the Olympics, it all means more overkill stamp issues. I despair of Royal Mail. And I'm not alone, the whole subject has been well debated in the national press, see page 67. I suspect many of us will sympathise with the article. ☐

CHAIRMAN'S PAGE

John Hayward

By the time you read this page our AGM will almost be upon us (Agenda details may be found at page 63 onwards). We are holding this once more at Swinpex on 9th June 2012, so please come along not just to this very good stamp fair and exhibition, but to our AGM and have your say on how the BTA is run. We would very much appreciate your views on the BTA's future which our Editor has highlighted in her article on page 66. Whilst mentioning our Editor, may I add that her handiwork, *Themescene*, has been accepted as an exhibit in the prestigious international literature exhibition, IPHLA 2012, which takes place in Mainz, Germany, in November later this year. This is a big event with over 550 literature exhibits on show and the BTA is looking forward to *Themescene* doing well in its category which would be a fine reward for Wendy's talents and hard work.

I was reading an article in May 2012 *Stamp Magazine* on design errors on stamps. No, not printing errors and misplaced perforations or missing colours, but mistakes by the stamp designer in what appears on the stamp. I always find these fascinating and often wonder why I have seen so few thematic collections or exhibits that are all about design errors. In fact I have seen only two thematic exhibits in over 30 years on this theme. One entitled "*Ooops!*" many years ago and another at Eurothema in Denmark in 2009. They were both highly original and showed a great depth of research to find the material. Surely someone could have a real go at this theme, otherwise one only sees a sprinkling of design errors from time to time in thematic displays or exhibits. Among the classics for such a theme are of course the St Kitts & Nevis Christopher Columbus stamp showing the discoverer looking at the New World through a telescope which had not then been invented, the Falklands Island stamp of the 1930s showing the wrong battleship, and the more recent New Zealand road safety issue with the youngster and teddy bear wrongly strapped in a car safety seat. The title page of "*Ooops!*" showed a cover from Nicaragua bearing a then current definitive stamp depicting a smoking volcano on the site of the proposed international canal to link the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. The cover was sent to an American Senator as an influential backer of the alternative trans-Panama route, as were many more, to highlight the dangers of the proposed route which was, needless to say, abandoned in favour of the trans-Panama isthmus route. The Nicaraguan stamp was probably the costliest philatelic design error made!

There are numerous stamps with design errors – the wrong people or dates are shown, or the description is wrong, or the designer has simply failed to carry out proper research into the subject matter. I'm sure you have all got some of these examples in your collections. It is much harder though to find design errors on philatelic material other than stamps, but they are there for the diligent searcher. Have a look at some of the illustrated GB booklets from the 1970s and 1980s. There is a 19th century bicycle on one booklet cover without any pedals on the front wheel! In my own collection I have an illustrated German postal stationery card of motor-cycle road racing with one of the machines carrying the number 13. Number 13 was anathema in racing circles for many years and not used because it was thought to be unlucky. Have I said enough to get anyone interested? It could be an amusingly delightful theme to collect.

Enjoy your collecting. 

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S PAGE

Peter Denly

Ordinary members	167	
Family members	14	
Junior members	2	
Society members	14	
Overseas members	16	
Overseas Society members	2	
Honorary members	4	
Total number of members	219	(At 10 th May 2012)

New Members joining since the March 2012 issue

Mrs. E. Grieve	Milford Haven	Mr. T. Hallenstvedt	Chelmsford
Mr. P.W. Harris	Westcliffe-on-Sea	Prof. P. Leonard	Twickenham
Mr. G. Wynn	Uxbridge		

Deaths advised since the March 2012 issue None

We take pleasure in welcoming five new members to the Association and hope they will be able to make use of the facilities that are provided. Whilst enrolling, it was noted that more than half our members have been in the Association now for 10 years or more.

This year there has been a most encouraging response to the renewal of membership with the majority of members re-joining well before the due date of 1st February 2012. However on a less positive note, with recruitment slower than last year the 14 members not re-joining have reduced our total membership to 219. To allow the Association to continue providing the magazine, workshops, meetings and other collector services, it is important that our numbers increase to provide the necessary revenue.

A recent initiative to approach the Federations and thus the local philatelic societies to offer speakers is bearing fruit with a good number of requests for displays over the next twelve months. Hopefully this will yield not only heightened interest in thematic collecting, but will also lead to new members wishing to join the Association. Nonetheless, our best form of advertising the presence of the BTA is through our membership, and we would urge each and every member to be an ambassador for the Association.

Nineteen members have now volunteered to be included on the speakers list, which can be found under Displays on the Website. Should you not have access to a computer, please feel free to contact the Membership Secretary for a copy of the list. When wishing to book a speaker we will be pleased to provide all necessary contact details.

I take this opportunity to remind members, that when making changes to addresses whether postal or email, please be sure to inform the Membership Secretary, which will ensure your copy of *Themescene* is delivered correctly. ☐

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The views expressed in these letters may not necessarily be those of the Editorial Board

ATTRACTING NON-COLLECTORS

From: Chris Yardley

I am prompted by the BTA speakers' list to suggest that if BTA members wish to speak publicly they make themselves known to the University of the Third Age (U3A).

I am a member of The Australian Capital Territory (Canberra) Branch of the U3A and they have cajoled me into three presentations, so far, to their "Aspects of Military History" course:

1. Military history on the stamps of Great Britain;

and more ambitiously

2. Military history on the stamps of Australia and the development of the ANZAC tradition,

3. Military history on the stamps of New Zealand and the development of the ANZAC tradition.

Papers developed from the two latter presentations are being published in the respective journals of the Military History Societies of both countries.

I have also been asked to re-present numbers 1 and 2 to another U3A course - the "Australian History" course. And that has had led to my being asked to prepare a paper for the course "Historians talking about history".

What is interesting is that I have never really been a thematic collector. I am currently a student at the Australian National University attached to the Australian National Centre for the Public Awareness of Science looking at 'science on stamps'. I have become adept at scanning and putting Microsoft PowerPoint presentations together. The rewards are in the comments of the audience, many of whom admit to being closet collectors, (and being asked to speak again).

As a retired person I am constantly encouraging my peers to look at a return to Uni to keep the mind active and my Uni is a very good club. U3A is also most rewarding.

Every best wish.

Editor's note: Chris has kindly agreed to one or more articles being published in *Themescene* in future issues.

DO YOU KNOW SOMEBODY

INTERESTED IN THEMATIC COLLECTING?

WOULD THEY LIKE TO JOIN A GROUP OF PEOPLE WHO KNOW ABOUT THEMATIC COLLECTING? IF SO, WHY NOT TELL THEM ABOUT THE...

BRITISH THEMATIC ASSOCIATION?

THE BRITISH EXPEDITIONARY FORCE IN FRANCE 1939 - 1940

Jim Etherington continues his look at World War II

In my previous article “Telling a Story using Postal History” (*Themescene* March 2012), I described how postal history can be used to enhance a story. In this second article I shall retell the same story, the experience of the BEF during 1939-1940, but on this occasion the focus will be on the range of other available philatelic material and non-philatelic ephemera that may be used to extend the same chapter of my story in greater depth.

Among material to be included are stamps, slogan cancellations, postal stationery cards, aerial dropped leaflets, postcards and special commemorative covers. It is acknowledged that some items included in the discussion are ineligible for exhibiting in thematic competitions because they do not comply with the strict, but necessary rules. However in our own collections and for displays being given to clubs such items like postcards, related paper ephemera and modern commemorative covers may be viewed as perfectly acceptable. Indeed their inclusion can often allow additional aspects of the story to be introduced and illustrated thus enhancing the overall comprehensiveness of the story being told. In the final analysis we should collect what we want to collect and if it helps in the narration of our story I see no reason why it should not be included.

Advance units of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) left Portsmouth for Cherbourg on Royal Navy destroyers on 4 September 1939, a day after Britain had declared war on Germany. Six days later the main force of BEF troops landed at Cherbourg, its stores and vehicles arriving via Brest, Nantes and St Nazaire (Figs 1 & 2), ports considered to be well beyond the range of enemy bombers. Initially four regular divisions of the BEF, 300,000 strong, moved north to occupy a 55 mile front on the Belgian border (Fig 3) with Line of Communication troops stretched out across northern France from the Belgian border to depots and delivery ports in the west.

Two separate contingents of the Royal Air Force accompanied the BEF to France. The Air Component of the BEF with its headquarters at Arras originally consisted of two army co-operation wings flying Lysanders, one fighter wing equipped with Hurricanes and one bomber reconnaissance squadron of Wellingtons (Fig 4). Further fighter squadrons were to arrive in France following the German invasion of the Low Countries. The second force, the Advance Air Striking Force (AASF) with its headquarters at Château Polignac near Reims comprised the entire strength of 1 Group, Bomber Command. In the battle to come the RAF was to suffer heavy losses, particularly among the obsolete Fairey Battles of the AASF (Fig 5).

The French were convinced the Germans would attack France through neutral Holland and Belgium as they had done in 1914. Secure in the belief of the impregnability of the Maginot Line (Fig 6), a series of heavily fortified defences stretching along the French border with Germany, and the Ardennes Forest being impassable for armour, the BEF together with the French 1st and 7th Army Groups dug in along the Belgian border. Anticipating the static trench warfare of the previous war (Fig 7) Allied forces dug in readiness for the expected attack.

What the Allied forces had not anticipated was the ‘Blitzkrieg’ attack, fast moving tanks with air cover and supported by motorised infantry, unleashed by the Germans on 10 May



Fig 1

The French post office has produced a large number of what are often termed ‘tourist’ slogan cancellations which usually feature important attractions in the towns and cities using the slogan.



Fig 2

One of a series of postcards entitled ‘Britain Prepared’ published during 1939-1940, some of which depict the BEF in France.



Fig 3

This Grenada/Grenadines of Grenada stamp (SG 1242) from the 1990 50th anniversary of World War 2 set is the only stamp issued depicting members of the BEF in France.

[Fig 4 see next page]

Fig 5

Part of the 1990 50th anniversary of the Battle of Britain set issued by Belize, this stamp shows a Fairey Battle of No 12 Squadron, one of three squadrons in No 76 (Bomber) Wing that formed part of the AASF. This squadron was stationed at Berry-au-Bac from 8 December 1939 until 16 May 1940, after which it returned to England





Fig 4

There are many stamps available depicting aircraft that saw service in France during 1939-40. The use of this 1980 GB £1.00 illustrated booklet (SG FH4) from the 'Military Aircraft' series showing a Hurricane and Wellington bombers provides a little more variety.



Fig 6

French stamp commemorating the 127th anniversary of the birth of André Maginot (SG 3283), the designer of the Maginot Line.

1940. Holland was overrun within five days, surrendering on 15 May. Seizing the strategically important Belgian fort at Eben Emael on 11 May with a daring airborne assault (Fig 8) German force quickly forced Allied troops who had advanced into Belgium in response to the German invasion into a hasty and disorganized retreat. German forces entered Brussels on 17 May and on 28 May King Leopold formally surrendered.

On the same day as the attack on Holland and Belgium the tanks of the 19th and 41st Panzer Corps crossed the French border on the Allies vulnerable left flank, surprising the French by rapidly advancing through the Ardennes. Crossing the River Meuse (Fig 9) at Sedan on 14 May they moved swiftly across northern France sweeping aside all attempts to halt their progress. The German plan was to encircle the BEF, the French Armies and the remnants of the defeated Belgian forces against the Channel coast, the intention being to force surrender or to annihilate the trapped forces.

On 20 May German Panzer forces (Fig 10) reached the coast near Abbeville. Boulogne was taken on 25 May and on the following day Calais fell despite strenuous efforts to defend the port. Having taken only eleven days to cover the 240 miles from the Luxembourg border the German tanks came to a halt at Gravelines, just southwest of Dunkirk. Simultaneously other Panzer divisions and Artillery forces had moved in from the Belgian border in the east forcing the Allies into a continually shrinking defensive pocket between Gravelines and Dunkirk (Fig 11). On 25 May the British Government ordered Lord Gort, the Commander of the BEF, to withdraw to the coast and save what he could of his army. Two days later he was issued with the official order to evacuate.

Back in Britain the War Office had been devising a plan, codenamed "Operation Dynamo", to evacuate the trapped British troops. Under the direction of Vice Admiral Bertram Ramsey (Fig 12) from his headquarters in Dover Castle Royal Navy destroyers and an armada of small ships (Fig 13) requisitioned for the purpose sailed for the Dunkirk beaches. As troops,

Fig 7

Original artist's sketch for the 1956 40th anniversary of the Battle of Verdun French commemorative stamp (SG 1278).

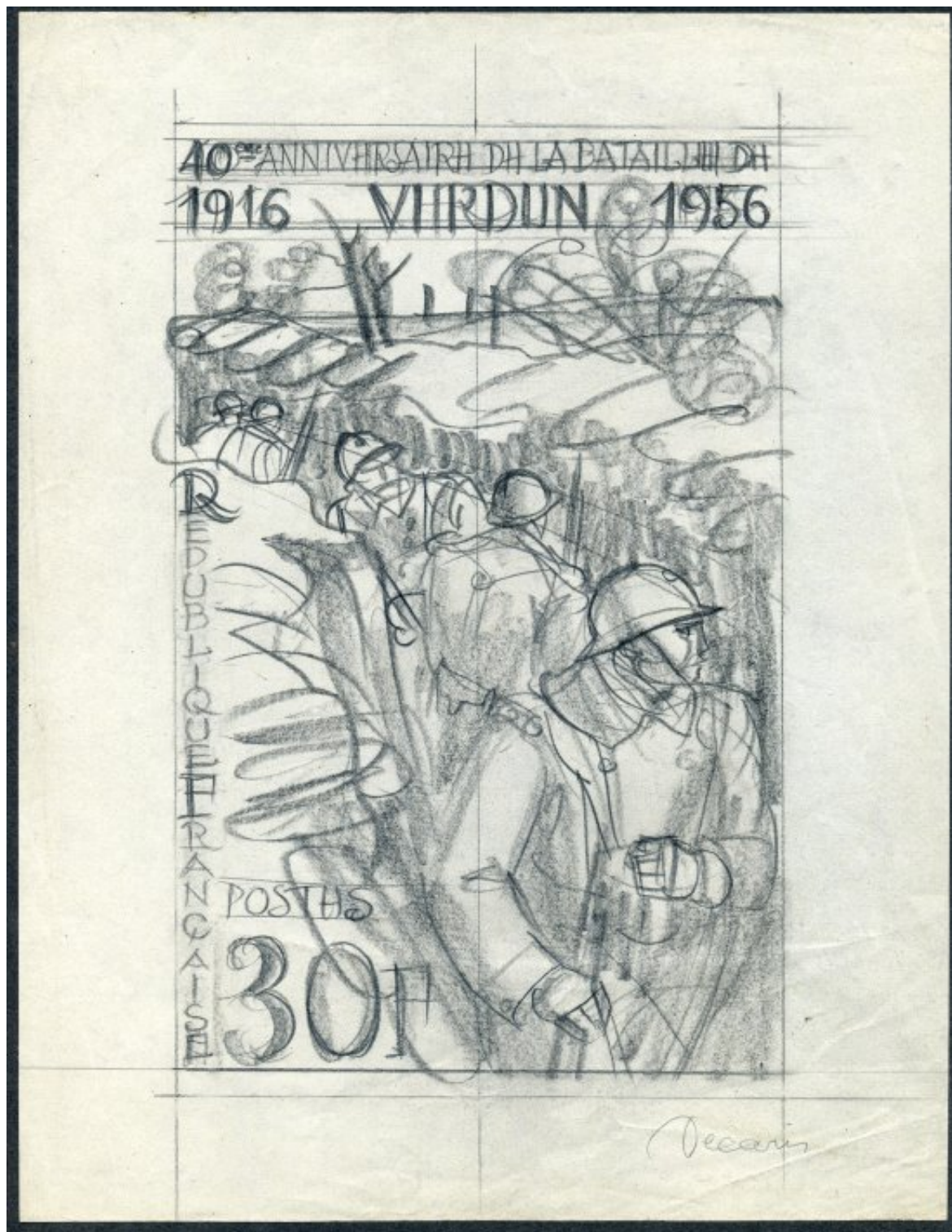




Fig 8
One of a series of German propaganda postal stationery cards depicting German forces attacking what could be the copulas of Eben Emael. Together with similar postal stationery cards these provide a rich source of illustrations for German forces in action.



Fig 9
A 1949 French stamp (SG 1069) showing a view of the River Meuse. There are numerous French stamps showing views and important buildings that may be used to illustrate locations relevant to the story of the BEF.



Fig 10
A Panzer tank in action (SG 830) from the German 1943 'Armed Forces' issue. A second similar issue in 1944 also provides good images of German forces. Other European countries allied to Germany also issued stamps depicting their fighting forces which may be used as an alternative to German stamps.



Fig 11
An aerial dropped leaflet scattered over the encircled BEF troops by the German Luftwaffe in an attempt to indicate the futility of their situation.



Fig 12
Although issued to commemorate the 50th anniversary of D-Day this Isle of Man stamp (SG 607) issued in 1994 is probably the only image of Admiral Ramsey to appear on a stamp.



Fig 13
The paddle steamer *Medway Queen*, requisitioned and converted to a minesweeper in 1939 is depicted on 75b stamp (SG 1332) of the 1992 Gambia issue 'River Boats of the World. Sometimes referred to as the 'Heroine of Dunkirk' she undertook seven

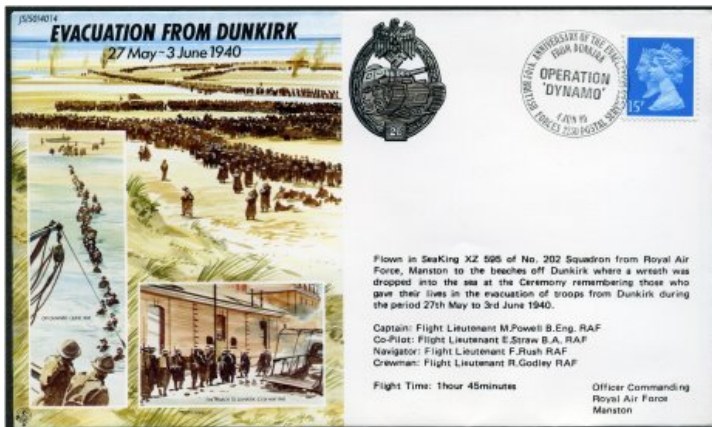


Fig 14. There are a number of series of modern commemorative covers produced by various military associations to raise funds, many of which are superbly illustrated and often bear relevant special commemorative handstamps, in this instance one marking the 50th anniversary of Operation Dynamo.



Fig 15
French stamp (SG 956) from the 1945 'Devastated towns' issue depicting Dunkirk following the evacuation of the BEF.

Continued from page 49 under continual air attack and artillery fire, waited in orderly lines on the quay and beaches (Fig 14) the smaller boats ferried men to the larger vessels moored offshore. In this way, and despite the loss of a number of destroyers and many of the smaller requisitioned boats, between 26 May and 4 June 338,226 British and Allied troops were brought safely back to the United Kingdom. The town of Dunkirk was left in ruins (Fig 15). However this was not the final evacuation. Line of Communication troops and other British units together with Allied forces not trapped in the Dunkirk pocket also had to be brought back. Having made their way to western and southern ports including St Nazaire, St Malo and Marseille, often under attack by the pursuing Germans, a further 191,870 British, French, Polish, Czech and Belgian troops were rescued by Royal Navy and civilian vessels. A grand total of 558,032 men had thus eluded the enemy's attempts to capture or destroy them; 368,491 of these being British troops.

With the return of the remnants of the BEF to Britain the task was to prepare for what was considered at the time the imminent threat of German invasion. However that's another chapter in my story of the events of 1940 and must wait for another day. ☐

EXOTIC FRUITS

Neil Pearce visits the greengrocer

A visit to your local supermarket or, where it still exists, a traditional greengrocer / fruiterer, will reveal a display of colourful fruits from semi-tropical and tropical countries often far-distant from Great Britain. Thanks to marine refrigeration and air transportation these frequently perishable fruit can be brought here in prime condition for early sale. As purchases are made I like to reflect on the ultimate source of their creation: the countries from which they may have originated. Some of these distant lands have organized export arrangements whereby their fruits are efficiently shipped to mid-latitude countries. It is from such states that we receive our exotic products. Other less-well developed low-latitude countries have yet to send their agricultural items overseas and instead meet the subsistence needs of their own inhabitants.



Selection of exotic fruits

As an aid to contemplating the geographical source of exotic fruits now in my kitchen I turn to my collection of stamps featuring tropical crops. A wide array of colourful and generally well-designed stamps portraying fruits is available for adding to one's album or display pages. A selection of these now follows, with brief descriptions of the characteristics of each fruit and, where appropriate, their mode of production. It is only a pity that *Themescene* has yet to reproduce illustrations in colour but perhaps we may look forward to this innovation as our British Thematic Association expands.



Avocado or Alligator Pear (*Persea Americana*) is native to Central Mexico and grown by the Aztecs. The tree is now found widely in Central and South American states, also African and Asian countries. The green-skinned fruit is a large pear-shaped, egg-shaped or circular berry with a large single seed. The shape is sometimes compared with that of a giant testicle, with the unproven claim that the avocado acts as an aphrodisiac. The creamy flesh offers 20 vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients. Avocados (like bananas) are known as climacteric fruit, maturing on the tree but ripening only off the tree.

The banana (*Musa acuminata*) is probably the most popular of tropical fruits found in British homes. It is the fruit of an herbaceous plant, not a tree, and – as depicted in the stamps from Grenada and Guinea – grows in bunches facing upwards. A native of South and



Southeast Asia, the banana is now grown in over 100 countries worldwide, although supplies for the U.K. come mainly from Central America, the West Indies and South America. Yellow in colour, soft and sweet when ripe, it is designated a dessert fruit as distinct from firmer, starchier fruit: plantain or cooking banana, less common in our shops. The stamps from St. Lucia and St. Vincent in the Caribbean depict the cultivation and handling of bananas after harvesting. The blue plastic wrap around the bunch shown in the St. Vincent stamp slows down the ripening process before the fruit reaches a refrigerated vessel at the coast.

A wide variety of citrus fruit is imported into Britain, from mainland European countries and those further afield. The commonest is the orange (*Citrus sinensis*), the most widely grown fruit tree in the world. It probably originated in S.E. Asia as a hybrid of ancient cultivation between a large pomelo (*Citrus maxima*) and mandarin (*Citrus reticulata*).

We usually peel or cut the sweet fruit to avoid the bitter rind (which goes into marmalade) then eat whole or process into orange juice. The principal exporting



Oranges

areas today are California and Florida in the U.S.A. and Brazil in South America. The mandarin orange (*Citrus reticulata*), tangerine (*Citrus tangerine*), satsuma and clementine are varieties of citrus fruit. The Guyanese stamp depicts a tangerine and segments dwarfed by a pawpaw.

Mandarin and tangerine



Grapefruit (*Citrus paradise*) is a hybrid of orange and pomelo, first bred in Jamaica and Barbados in the West Indies. The shape of the large fruit is described as an oblate spheroid (as is our earth). It is yellow-skinned and the acidic flesh is white, pink or purple depending on varying sweetness. The principal producers of grapefruit today are the American states of Arizona, California, Florida and Texas.



Lemon (*Citrus limon*) is another native of Asia, a yellow skinned fruit with an ellipsoid shape. Its citric acid produces a sour taste but the juice, pulp and rind makes lemon flavouring an important ingredient in many dishes around the world.



Lime is a term referring to a number of different citrus fruits. Typically round, green to yellow in colour and, like lemon, with a sour taste, it is used to accent the flavouring of food and drinks. Historically, lime juice was given to British sailors to check scurvy, hence the term 'limeys.'



Guava or Apple Guava (*Psidium guajava*) is a plant of the myrtle family comprising numerous tropical shrubs and small trees. Native to Mexico, Central and northern South American countries, it is found growing today in the Caribbean, Florida, Hawaii and S.E. Asian countries. Round or oval in shape, yellow when ripe, the off-white or pink pulp features

in juice concentrates along with other tropical fruits such as lime, mandarin, mango, orange, passion fruit, and papaya.



Mango

Mango (*Mangifera indica*) is a native of India and that country is still the largest producer of the fruit although it accounts for less than one per cent of international trade in mangoes. Cultivation has spread to S.E. Asia, Africa and the New World. The stone fruit varies in shape, size and skin colour - yellow and red - while the fibrous seed is set in yellow flesh.

Papaya

Papaya (*Carica papaya*), commonly called pawpaw or papaw, originated from Southern Mexico, Central America and northern South America but is now cultivated in most tropical

countries. The tree grows rapidly, producing fruit from seeding after just a year or so. The fruit varies in shape and the skin turns from green to yellow when ripe. The pulp is orangey in colour and surrounds a proliferation of seeds, as shown in the stamps from Cuba and Venda. The flesh may be eaten raw but is more often an ingredient in tropical fruit juices sold in Britain.



Passion Fruit (*Passiflora edulis*) is native to Brazil, Paraguay and northern Argentina but is widely grown around the world today. Round to oval in shape, yellow or dark purple in colour, the common or Golden Passion Fruit can grow as large as a grapefruit, while the Purple Passion Fruit is smaller than a lemon. The juicy interior is sweet and contains lots of seeds. Here in the U.K. the fruit is usually found juiced, forming a welcome addition to the juices of other exotics. It is also a delicacy in yoghurt and ice cream. A granddaughter, living in Hawaii, sends me jars of delicious passion fruit jam.

Wild Pineapple (*Ananas comosus*) was indigenous to South America although the origins of the domesticated plant are uncertain. It spread to the West Indies, across the Pacific to Hawaii



and the Philippines and eventually to Africa and S.E. Asia. The fruit consists of coalesced berries and is named for its resemblance to the pine cone. Orange in colour when mature, the flesh is yellow. It is consumed fresh, canned or juiced.

Pomegranate (*Punica granatum*) is native to the Caucasus region, whence it spread to most countries in the Middle East, India and other

South Asian and Southeast Asian countries. It was introduced to Latin America and California by the Spanish. As the stamps reveal, pomegranate are even cultivated in Atlantic and Pacific Islands. A circular reddish fruit with numerous seeds it is another favoured ingredient in tropical fruit drinks in Britain.



Summary

We trust this brief review of exotic fruits and their depiction on thematic stamps will have proved interesting to readers and perhaps encouraged them, if not already featuring agricultural products in their collections, to branch out into this aspect of our hobby. There are many more existing tropical fruit stamps to view and new issues appear with some regularity. Meanwhile, for a healthy diet, try consuming more of these delicious imports!

Acknowledgements

Factual information on the fruit featured in this article was derived from the free encyclopaedia Wikipedia. ☐

NEW ISSUES

*The stamps below are reproduced with the kind assistance of Harry Allan,
P O Box 5, Poole, Dorset, BH12 9GF*

Nearly all the stamps received recently have been on the theme of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, so here is a small selection:



SPRING STAMPEX

Spring Stampex this year focused on the ‘pictorial classes’: Thematic, Open and Postcard. The exhibition on the Village Green attracted a pleasing amount of interest from visitors, while three well-attended seminars offered help and advice to competitors and potential competitors.

HOW TO BUILD UP A THEMATIC EXHIBIT SUCCESSFULLY. Wolf Hess RDP

Report by Wendy Buckle

The distinguished philatelist Wolf Hess (and lead thematic judge at Stampex) gave a very helpful seminar on thematic exhibiting. It was very well attended by around 30 people, quite a few of whom were later guided by his critique of their entry. I think “fair but firm” reasonably sums up his approach. Anyone wanting to hone their competition skills at national and international level would be wise to listen to him. In outline the seminar covered:

Resources

Make sure you have copies of *General Regulations Of The FIP For The Evaluation Of Competitive Exhibits At FIP Exhibitions* (GREV) and *Special Regulations For The Evaluation Of Thematic Exhibits At FIP Exhibitions* (SREV). (Both can be found under the ‘Regulations’ link from the home page of the F.I.P. <http://www.f-i-p.ch/>).

Collect primary and secondary literature on your chosen theme. Acquire knowledge of what material is available to the market. Use your own insight: how successful can an exhibit on your theme become? Be realistic about what can be achieved.

Get Assistance

Try and find a ‘godparent’ for your exhibit; someone knowledgeable who will help and advise. Learn from other philatelic classes. Before buying that expensive item make absolutely sure it is allowable. Start with a 16 page exhibit, get feedback, then expand it.

The progression from concept to exhibit is: idea/concept – gather material – arrange the material – exhibit.

Title

Do not go for too broad a theme; narrow it down and go into detail. Be specific: your title must express what you are showing, so don’t make it too general. The subtitle should explain and enhance the title. Do not use philatelic expressions in the title or plan.

Plan

Title and plan must correspond. The plan should be expressive, easy to understand, logical and well structured. Judges will check that you have followed the plan in your pages, so use the plan section headings on each page. Your plan must tell a story, not just be an inventory.

Development

Demonstrate your story clearly in a logical and well structured way. The flow goes top left to bottom right on each page, and similarly on each frame. Explain philatelic items only where it is not obvious (for instance don’t say “registered cover” unless the registration marks relate to your theme). Write up the philatelic information in order to show profound philatelic knowledge. Your thematic text must relate closely to the material shown. It should be placed close to the item (not all at the top or bottom of the page) and be as terse as possible.

Material

The selection of material must be well balanced and include important items. You need two or three different philatelic elements on each page, and don’t duplicate the same design one from a set will suffice. When you have achieved success with five frames build it up to eight frames slowly.

Research and Philatelic Knowledge

All material must be of proper postal origin and use. Fuller details will be found in the F.I.P. regulations. Collect a good variety of material and look for the important and the unusual, rarity will catch the judges interest. Use your philatelic knowledge of traditional and postal history collecting to find good philatelic material such as proofs and essays.

Presentation

This must be attractive and appeal to the onlooker.

Having gone through his presentation and taken questions Wolf threw out a challenge: frame 3023 of the displays in the Village Green was "Venice: political rise and fall" a one-framer put together by himself with ten deliberate mistakes. The audience were asked to try and identify all ten, after which the meeting would reconvene. A prize was offered for the most correct entries. It's fair to say we failed miserably. No-one got all the answers, but John Hayward and Lesley Marley did get enough right to each win a book. It was a light-hearted quiz, but made me at least realise the depth of philatelic knowledge that is expected of exhibitor and judge. Competing at thematics at this level is fun, but it's not easy.

COLLECTING AND EXHIBITING PICTURE POSTCARDS Seija-Riitta Laakso

Report by Barry Stagg

Seija-Riitta Laakso's illustrated talk was interesting, different and for me inspirational. She clearly wants postcards (deltiology) to be seen on a par with philately, and seeing her wonderful postcards on 'a trip around Europe' I can see her point. Most of what she showed was from the Golden Age for postcards (from 1898 to 1914). The colours on them were superb and the pictures were interesting and exciting – particularly those from Paris and the Moulin Rouge! The colours, the technical details, the stories the postcards tell makes deltiology a worthy area of study. For instance I did not know that the white space around the edge of early postcards was there to allow the sender to write a message as the non-picture side was just for the address. The world agreed (in 1902 I believe she said) on having 'divided backs' on postcards – message on the left and addresses on the right. She also made the (very) strong point that postcards look better with people in them! A theme she kept coming back to in her talk. I was also surprised to learn that illustrated postal stationery is permitted in a postcard display if it supports the story being told. She really was a font of deltiological knowledge. I look forward to buying her book later in the year, and if you have an interest in postcards – and what philatelist does not have a few hidden away in their collection – you may wish to do the same. Now, time for me to add a new search criteria to eBay – Postcards and Moulin Rouge!

EXHIBITING IN THE OPEN PHILATELY CLASS: NEW RULES AND ADVICE TO EXHIBITORS. Birthe King and Christine Earle

Report by Margaret Morris

The third seminar was devoted to the Open Class and was led by Christine Earle and Birthe King. Both are high award winners and also judges so their explanation of the requirements for this Class was of great interest, especially with regard to the balance of philatelic and non-philatelic material. The presentations were conducted with great humour and backed up by a stylish PowerPoint presentation on which they had obviously worked jointly. My only comment, and this applies to most seminars and teach-ins, is that by using their own collections as examples speakers are in danger of saying "this is how I do it" rather than "this is how YOU can do it". ☹

STAMPEX COMPETITIONS

*John Hayward casts an expert eye over the entries
[full details of the competition results follow this article]*

The philatelic competitions majored on the Pictorial Classes – thematic philately, postcards and the open class. These occupied the whole of the Village Green and what struck me immediately I saw them was how colourful and attractive they were. Something else also struck me which I had not appreciated previously. This was in the thematic class where all the exhibits were competing together, i.e. national and internationally qualified exhibits were competing alongside each other, together with honorary exhibits which were not judged. They all made for a superb mixture of themes and achievement.

There were 16 exhibits in the thematic class, the majority as to be expected from our own members, and they did us proud. Barry Stagg's *Parachuting with Dolly Shepherd* was I thought an unusual approach to this theme, but it was a much improved exhibit from last time round gaining a vermeil medal. I very much liked Anne Stammers' *From Rocks to Riches*. She has worked hard to improve this exhibit and I felt a vermeil medal was a disappointing award, especially when compared to the exhibit alongside hers – *The Atlantic Puffin: The Clown of the Ocean* by Van Laere from Denmark. This was just a 16 page exhibit that scored a large vermeil. It was virtually all modern material from the countries we all try to avoid collecting and grossly overmarked in my view. Thank goodness for Peter Weir's *Liquid of Life* which I viewed next. Peter's theme is blood and it must be very difficult to emulate the late Steve Boorn on such a similar theme and do so well. His exhibit contained a superb mixture of philatelic items and deserved its gold medal award.

Francis Kiddle's *Goats* was amongst the honorary exhibits and not therefore judged. It was a superb exhibit on a subject you would wonder could support 5 frames. I next came across Richard Wheeler's *Evolution of Puppetry* which was awarded a gold medal and the best in show. Richard, I would have given you a gold medal alone for shortening that previously wretchedly long title of yours! It now contains a superb first page that hits the viewer and then follows great use of one and one third size pages. I particularly liked the Indonesian items shown in part sheets, but the over-use of printed to private order postal stationery items was a detraction. I was very impressed with Leif Rasmussen's *Rulers and Subjects in Bygone Times*. A huge amount of postal history was included and the exhibit told a lovely story. It only gained a silver medal – I thought it should have done better. *London Life Through the Centuries* by Angela Reilly was basically a one country thematic, but she had managed to bring into the exhibit other countries' material which can be difficult to do. She was awarded a bronze medal.

Geoff Hood surprised me with his *Signs of Life*. This illustrated the seven ages of man, totally different from his usual fine heraldry exhibits. I liked the plan and the story. He deserved his 78 points and a vermeil medal. Mark Humfrey showed *Globalisation of Vanilla*. This was much improved on his exhibit which won the BTA Cup last year. He has gone to attractive one and one third size pages and collected a vermeil medal. I look forward to his display after the BTA AGM at Swinpex. Wendy Buckle's *Paper Trail* was highly original and well constructed. I particularly liked the GB perfin for Dickinson paper on a paid invoice from the same company. She gained a large vermeil medal. Some of us more experienced exhibitors will have to look to our laurels as Wendy is fast improving. Grace Davies filled just one frame with *Symbols of Peace – The Dove and the Olive Branch*. I thought in one frame she presented what must be a massive theme very well, obtaining a large silver medal.

Ron Backhouse's *Anyone for Tennis?* is well known to me at international level and showed a huge range of different philatelic material from many countries spanning over 100 years. This is an excellent exhibit on a sporting theme and justified its gold medal.

What can I say about Wolf Hess' two exhibits in the honorary panel? His one frame exhibit, *Venice – Political Rise and Fall*, contained everything a thematic exhibit should contain. Postal history items with a thematic connection, some from more than two centuries ago, abounded. There were numerous non-Italian items to flesh out this seemingly one country thematic. His *American Indians* I had seen before in Essen last year and it is truly outstanding. The story is compelling and moving at times, beautifully illustrated with a host of different philatelic items amongst which the postmarks of Indian origin impressed me most.

I must admit I had too little time to look at all the postcard and open class exhibits, but what I did see impressed me. Several of our members did well in these classes. John Baron got a vermeil medal for *The English State Lotteries 1566-1826*, Brian Hague obtained a large silver for *Faroe Islands – The British Garrison in WW II*, and Brian Sole was awarded a vermeil medal for his *Story of the British Greetings Telegram*. Our honorary life member, Margaret Morris, now a venerable octogenarian, showed what really can be done with her *Greenland Life* in the postcard class which was awarded a gold medal. But my abiding memory was of Trevor Cornford's *Sir Ernest Shackleton's Antarctic Voyages 1901-1922* in the open class. He illustrated the evocative and compelling stories of these voyages so well in my view, yet only obtained a large vermeil medal. By chance a viewer standing next to me mentioned in an Irish brogue that he was related to one of the explorers in that photograph. "Good Lord, Shackleton" I thought. No, Tom Crean, who shared the epic small boat voyage with Shackleton to South Georgia and walked across that island with Shackleton back to civilisation. There is no accounting for serendipity!

STAMPEX COMPETITION RESULTS

THEMATIC

Richard Wheeler	The Evolution of Puppetry	Gold	88
Peter Weir	Liquid of Life - Blood, from an Ancient Myth to a Modern Medicine	Gold	87
Ron Backhouse	Anyone for Tennis?	Gold	86
Roger Van Laere	Atlantic Puffin: The Clown of the Ocean	Large Vermeil	82
Erik Kolmos	The Flying Door	Large Vermeil	81
Wendy Buckle	Paper Trail	Large Vermeil	80
Geoff Hood	Signs of Life	Vermeil	78
Mark Humfrey	Globalisation of Vanilla	Vermeil	77
Barry Stagg	Parachuting with Dolly Shepherd	Vermeil	77
Anne Stammers	From Rocks to Riches	Vermeil	75
Grace Davies	Symbols of Peace - The Dove and the Olive Branch	Large Silver	71
Leuf Rasmussen	Rulers and Subjects in Bygone Times	Silver	65
Angela Reilly	London Life through the Centuries	Bronze	55

THEMATIC (continued)

Non Competitive: Jury Class

Wolf Hess	The American Indians
Wolf Hess	Venice - Political Rise and Fall
Francis Kiddle	Goats

OPEN

John Hansen	The Birth of a Nation	Large Vermeil	83
Frank Marshall	The life and times of Habuey Hon	Large Vermeil	83
Claire Scott	The Wounded Soldier's Story	Large Vermeil	83
Poul Nielsen	No more War	Large Vermeil	81
Trevor Cornford	Sir Ernest H. Shackleton's Antarctic Voyages 1901-1922	Large Vermeil	80
John Baron	The English State Lotteries 1566-1826	Vermeil	78
Tony Walker	The Battle of the Falkland Islands in 1914	Vermeil	76
Brian Sole	The Story of the British Greetings Telegram	Vermeil	75
Brian Hague	Faroe Islands - The British Garrison in WW2	Large Silver	74
Graham Booth	Mail between Dieppe and the Sussex Coast 1800-1980	Large Silver	73
Thomas Fowler	The Development of British Airports	Large Silver	70

Non Competitive: Jury Class

Christine Earle	They also Served
Birthe King	Denmark: Conscience, Conflict and Camps 1932-1949

POSTCARD

Margaret Morris	Greenland Life	Gold	85
Thomas Fowler	Berlin Zentralflughafen Tempelhofer Feld	Large Silver	72
Jonathan Spooner	The Evolution of the Picture Post Card in Great Britain	Silver	66

Non Competitive: Jury Class

Seija-Riitta Laakso	Paris 1900
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BTA NEWS

MEMBERS' MEETING 20 OCTOBER 2012.

DEWAR CENTRE, PERTH, PH2 8HB

The British Thematic Association will be holding a members' meeting at the ABPS National Philatelic Exhibition, Perth 2012, at the above venue from 1000 to 1200 hrs on Saturday 20th October 2012. The meeting will comprise displays by members, so please bring along up to 12 sheets on any thematic subject you like to display and talk about for no more than 3 minutes. We also hope to have on sale some of the material recently donated by members.

It is particularly pleasing to announce this meeting as the BTA has not held a members' meeting in Scotland for 12 years. So Scottish members and BTA members visiting the Exhibition, please make a note in your diaries to come to the meeting if you have not already done so. You do not have to display if you do not wish to. There will be a small nominal charge of £1 per person to help defray the cost of the meeting.

BTA GUIDELINES TO EXHIBITING

Last June John Hayward and Jim Etherington ran a seminar at the RPSL on Thematic Exhibiting. Now, after a lot of hard work by John, that seminar has been digitised and is available on the BTA website from the Exhibiting page at:

<http://www.brit-thematic-assoc.com/Documents/themexhib.pdf>

The aim is to encourage more competitors in the Thematic class at Stampex and in the BTA Cup, and of improving standards in the thematic competitions at Federation and National level. It contains a wealth of ideas and suggestions with chapters covering Presentation; Title and Plan; Developing the Plan; Thematic and Philatelic Knowledge; and Condition and Rarity. If you enjoy competitions this is a must-read.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The BTA AGM will be held again this year at Swinpex, where will be 48 dealers and at least 12 specialist societies. There is free parking, with access via the M4 or A419 as well as a regular train service.

The 21st Annual General Meeting of the British Thematic Association will be held on Saturday June 9th 2012 at 2.30 p.m. at Swinpex at St Joseph's Catholic College, Ocotal Way, Swindon, SN3 3LR

Nominations for Officers and Committee Members and any other motions for discussion should be received by the Secretary by **June 5th 2012** although nominations will be taken at the meeting in view of the short time span.

The meeting will be followed by a display on 'Vanilla' by Mark Humfrey, winner of the BTA Cup in 2011

Signed: *M. Anne Stammers* (Hon. Secretary) 17 April 2012

Agenda follows on next page.

AGENDA

- 1 Apologies for absence
- 2 Minutes of the 20th Annual General Meeting published in Themescene September 2011
- 3 Matters Arising
- 4 Chairman's report
- 5 Treasurer's report and adoption of Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2011
- 6 Election of Officers
The following Officers have indicated that they are willing to stand for re-election:
 John Hayward Chairman
 Anne Stammers Secretary
 Peter Wood Treasurer
- 7 Election of Committee members
The following members have indicated that they are willing to stand for re-election:
 Currently Peter Denly FRPSL Membership Secretary
 Currently Wendy Buckle Editor Themescene
 Currently Simon Moorcroft Publicity Officer
 Currently Michael Blackman Advertising Manager
 Currently Brian Sole FRPSL Committee member
 Currently Jim Etherington Committee member
 Currently Gerald Lovell Committee member
 Currently Charles Oppenheim Committee member
 Currently Barry Stagg Committee member
- 8 Ratification by the membership of appointment of
 Ron Backhouse Librarian
 Grahame Boutle Examiner
- 9 Motions for Discussion
 (i) This Meeting agrees that the Constitution of the British Thematic Association be amended in Clause 3 (d) by deleting at the beginning of the second line the words "publish other booklets, newsletters," and inserting "issue any other publications" instead.
 Proposed by the Committee
 (ii) This Meeting agrees that the Constitution of the British Thematic Association be amended in Clause 4 (e) iv by deleting the words "c II and e III" in brackets and inserting the words "e iii" instead. **Proposed by the Committee**
10. Any Other Business

THE BRITISH THEMATIC ASSOCIATION
Account for the year ended 31 December 2011

2010	INCOME	2011
4,034	Subscriptions	3,406
3	Publications - net surplus	0
23	Sales of donated items	80
3	Bank Interest	3
4,063		3,489
	EXPENDITURE	
2,963	"Themescene" - Printing + Distribution Expenses	2,766
- 501	less : Advertising Income (net)	- 696
161	Meetings (net of seminar income)	71
12	BTA Cup expenses	74
- 30	less: entry fees	- 60
332	Committee Meeting Expenses	223
75	Publicity and Web Site	178
-	NPS Initiative (Ideal Home Exhibition)	240
-	less: committee (personal) donations	- 220
119	Insurance	119
443	Affiliations	411
291	Administration expenses	228
8	ATA costs	11
-	Sundry expenses	52
772	BTA costs for Stampworld 2010	-
- 250	less : from Stampworld fund (donations)	-
- 213	Sales, commission and table share income.	-
4,182		3,397
- 119	SURPLUS (deficit in 2010)	92
4,063		3,489

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2011

	Accumulated fund	
4,912	Balance at 1.1.2011	4,793
- 119	add : Surplus for the year (deficit in 2010)	92
4,793		4,885
	Represented by:	
4,890	Cash at Bank: Deposit Account	4,890
1,980	Current Account	2,497
157	Stock of publications	157
75	Amounts due and Payments in advance	0
7,102		7,544
- 1,205	less: Subs received in advance	-1,542
- 1,104	less: Amounts due or Received in advance	-1,117
4,793		4,885

Hon. Treasurer: P. J. Wood

Hon. Examiner: G. C. Boutle

FUTURE OF THE BTA: DISCUSSION PAPER

In common with many societies the BTA is losing members. Every year a few fewer members renew their subscriptions. The BTA Membership Secretary, together with all Committee members, work hard to attract new members, and although we do get new recruits each year it is not enough to make up for those leaving, and of course this is having a major effect on our finances. The Committee has discussed this and feels that we need to take action for the continued success of the Association; but firstly we would like to know your views.

One suggestion is to widen the remit of the Association. We are primarily a thematic association, but in recent years collectors have shown an increasing interest in Open philately, and postcard collecting, both of them topics probably followed by thematic collectors anyway since we all like to collect material relevant to our subject irrespective of what format it takes. It is interesting to note that several BTA members gained success at Stampex this year in both the Postcard and Open classes. Whilst there are many regional/local postcard clubs throughout the UK (and indeed many 'stamp and postcard' clubs) there is no national organisation, and no organisation taking on the mantle of Open philately. Should the BTA do this?

Another suggestion is to change our name. Changing the name completely may be too radical, since all publications would need to be reprinted, and the Constitution rethought. However, if we changed our name to "British Topical Association" it would still mean being the BTA. It would still imply thematics (by use of the American term) but would open it up. It may well be that currently "thematics" has an unfortunate image. Some people equate thematic collecting with thematic exhibiting, and are understandably put off by the restrictive rules. Avoiding the use of that term may attract people who have subject collections but are not currently members because they think it's not for them.

To adopt either or both of these ideas would mean some changes for the BTA. We currently have some experts in both Open and Postcard collecting among our membership, but this expertise is not represented on the Committee. We would need to harness this expertise and demonstrate that we are able to talk knowledgeably about these topics in order to be taken seriously by philatelic authorities. Currently the BTA is approached on thematic matters, but there would be a job to do in making us the authority on all the pictorial classes. And in doing this is there any danger of the BTA losing its current authority? It has flown the flag for thematic collecting since 1984, should it continue to do so or rebrand itself?

At the BTA AGM at Swinpex this year (June 9th) we will be raising this topic after the formal agenda. We really want to know your views. If you can make it to the meeting you can join in the discussion. If not, please write/email the Editor who will take along all submissions received and make sure they are heard. ☐

HOW STAMP COLLECTING CAME UNSTUCK

Hunter Davies laments current Royal Mail policy

This will be a bumper year for commemorative stamps, with the Royal Mail showing out loads of new issues for the Queen's jubilee, the Olympics, sheep, pigs, anything at all really. It has become the perfect definition of a licence to print money.

People in the philatelic world are up in arms about it, realising it is doing their hobby no good. There are just so many new issues each year that children and new collectors will be priced out of the market, should they try to keep up with the output. Though in its defence the Royal Mail said this week that it has deliberately reduced the number of new commemorative issues this year, as a response to complaints.

One of my rules for collecting is never collect stuff that was made for collecting. I predict that this time next year, if you visit the stamp stalls under the arches at Charing Cross station in central London any Saturday morning, you will see boxes of recent first-day covers – originally selling at around £5-£10 – lying in bargain boxes at £1 each.

I do break my own rule all the time. And I collect commemorative stamps – as long as they are very old. The first ones appeared in 1924 to celebrate the British Empire Exhibition. They were not produced cynically, as they are now, to make a quick and easy buck. There were only two values – the 1d and 1 ½d – so there was not exactly overkill. Once it was all over, our stamps reverted to their normal size and design, as they had been since 1840 when it all began with the Penny Black. These are known in the trade as definitives: little stamps with the monarch's head on.

Now and again we were treated to the odd special stamp, usually for a royal or national occasion, such as George V's silver jubilee in 1935, or the Olympics in London in 1948. But the flood of commemorative stamps began in the 1960s when the Post Office got wise to the commercial possibilities. In recent years, we have had 14-15 new issues every year.

One of the reasons for their success was the rise of what are known as thematics. Thematic collectors only go for stamps showing birds, for example, or railways, or famous painting – or, in my case, football. It is fascinating to see all the special issues that have been produced around the world for a World Cup, many of them beautifully designed. My faves include the Italian set for the 1934 World Cup, and the GB set for 1966, when England won. So that makes them pretty special. But I draw the line at any football stamps after 1966, or any commemorative ones after the 60s. There are just so many, so gaudy, so nasty, so manipulative.

This, of course, is hard cheese for the philatelic trade. When I became a born-again stamp collector 30 years ago – a normal human process, whereby we regress to our childhood interests – there were around 20 different stamp shops centred on the Strand in London. Oh, it was rapture on a Saturday morning. Now, I can only think of two. Stamp collecting has taken a battering.

Which is a shame. Stamps are portable, easy to sort and arrange, and cheap to buy (in fact free, if you steam them off envelopes). They are terribly educational and informative – and also therapeutic. When I was in bed as a child, racked with asthma, I would turn over the pages of my stamp album – and in half an hour my wheezing would have stopped.

Continued on page 68

HERE AND THERE

ROYAL PHILATELIC SOCIETY OF LONDON

From RPSL Press Release

The RPSL has announced the formation of a partnership with preeminent philatelic libraries around the world to provide a centralised gateway to the greatest philatelic research in existence. Founding partners with the Royal in the initiative include the Smithsonian's National Postal Museum and Smithsonian Libraries, Washington, DC, USA, and the American Philatelic Research Library, Bellefonte, PA, USA.

The goal of the project is to establish a single destination - a centralised gateway - by which philatelists around the world can search, locate and access philatelic research from partner libraries in real-time, from any computer. Searchable listings of books and publications, as well as resource locations and access, will be one click away, providing an invaluable resource to those doing philatelic research. Major pre-1923 publications, including *The Stamp-Collector's Magazine Illustrated*, London, from 1865-1874, have been digitised and will be made available at no charge. Other resources considered proprietary by partnering libraries may also be accessed through membership programmes and other avenues via the centralised gateway, which is planned to launch in June.

'This is a fantastic programme that will benefit philatelists around the world', said Allen Kane, director of the Smithsonian Museum. 'I would like to thank Alan Holyoake [of The Royal Philatelic Society London] for proposing the concept and helping to make it become a reality'.

HOW STAMP COLLECTING CAME UNSTUCK

Continued from page 67

I bought albums, packets of stamps and tweezers for my own children, and now my grandchildren. And are they interested? Are they heckers. Not when they have smartphones and iPads and computers to play with. I do fear that the Royal Mail, with its greed, is likely to kill off a humble, harmless childhood hobby, once and for all.

Reprinted, with permission, from *The Guardian* 13 April 2012.

Link: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/apr/13/stamp-collecting-killed-by-royal-mail?INTCMP=SRCH>

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GROUP NEWS

ASTRO STAMP SPACE SOCIETY

Jeff Dugdale pays tribute to Harvey Duncan, Treasurer of the ASSS, who died recently.

A Society Treasure



I first met Harvey Duncan in 1995 when, soon after I had joined our Society, he approached me when I offered my services as a possible new Editor. We lived relatively close to each other as my home was then near Dundee and as a pair of teachers, space stamp collectors and plain speaking dour Scots we hit it off straight away.

Since then we met at least once a year either at stamp fairs in Perth or when he would call in to see me in my new home near Fochabers as he visited friends in Strathspey. I always admired his generosity, modesty, his pawky humour and his unfailingly positive outlook on life, despite the personal tragedy he had suffered in becoming a widower far earlier than he might have expected to.

Harvey contributed to the welfare of our Society in many ways - as Treasurer who remitted office with the accounts in very good heart, as the original postal packet organiser, as compiler of superb award-winning space stamp checklists published in parts with *Orbit* and latterly as indexer of all the articles in that magazine. In this latter capacity you can imagine his “joy” when he realised I had numbered consecutive issues “85” in March and June 2010 - “What the blazes were you thinking of...etc” - and then a smirk down the phone as he worked out a way to get round that problem.

I last saw him in October at Scottish Congress in Perth when we shared “news” over some lunch. Stamps were his life once he was on his own and I know how much fulfillment being a member of philatelic societies brought him. I shall miss him very much. ☺

BTA DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES:

9 June	BTA AGM at Swinpex, Swindon
6 – 7 July	ThematiX at Chessington
5 – 7 October	BTA Fun With Philately Weekend at Oxford
20 October	BTA Members Meeting at ABPS National Philatelic Exhibition, Perth

GROUP MEMBERS

Alba Stamp Group

Mr. S. Brown, 14 Buchan Drive, Perth, PH1 1NQ.

Astro Space Stamp Society

Brian Lockyer, 21 Exford Close, Weston-super-Mare, Somerset BS23 4RE

Web: <http://astropacestampsociety.com/>

Bicycle Stamps Club

Mr. B. J. Sole, 3 Stockfield Road, Claygate, Esher, Surrey KT10 0QJ.

Web: <http://www.members.tripod.com/~bicyclestamps/>

Bird Stamp Society

Mr G. Horsman, 23a East Main Street, Blackburn, West Lothian, EH47 7QR.

Web: <http://www.birdstampsociety.org>

Captain Cook Society

Mr I. A. Peel, 13 Caudry Close, Thornhill, Dewsbury, West Yorkshire, WF12 0LW.

Web: <http://www.captaincooksociety.com/ccsul.htm>

Concorde Study Circle

Mr B. L. Asquith, Alandale, Radcliffe Gardens, Carshalton Beeches, Surrey,

SM5 4PQ. Web: http://www.concorde-jet.com/e_concorde_study_circle.htm

Glasgow Thematic Society

Mrs M. Mathieson, 17 Hairmyers Park, East Kilbride, Glasgow, G75 8SS.

Guild of St. Gabriel

Rev. D. C. Hague, 16 Filder Close, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN22 8SY.

Masonic Philatelic Club

Mr. M. Beazley, 216 West Dyke Road, Redcar, N. Yorks, TS10 4JS

Web: <http://www.masonicphilatelicclub.org.uk/>

Scout and Guide Stamp Club

Mr. T. Simister, 1 Falcon Way, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 8AY

Web: <http://www.sgsc.org.uk/index.shtml>

Ship Stamp Society

Mr. T. Broadley, 10 Heyes Drive, Lymm, Cheshire, WA13 0PB.

Web: http://www.chez.com/philateliemarine/phil_mar_e/SSS.htm

West of England Thematic Society

Mrs. G. Gray, 6 Compton Avenue, Mannamead, Plymouth, Devon, PL3 5BZ

Web: <http://www.wessexpf.org.uk/WETS/>

STAMP ACTIVE NETWORK

Details of this year's Youth Championships including entry dates, guidance notes and entry forms are now available on the Stamp Active planetstamp.co.uk website, and can be found in the Rocket News section under Competitions, using the tabs Youth Entry and Youth Notes. The championships are held at Autumn Stampex, are sponsored by Stanley Gibbons, and are open to all young collectors up to the age of 21 years as at 1st September 2012.

There is a cash prize of £100 for the most promising entry and £25 prizes for all other class winners (if there are at least two entries in the class). We hope that this will provide an incentive to encourage more youngsters to enter.

Later in the year the Brilliant Britain competition will be run at Autumn Stampex again. This is aimed at younger Primary School collectors and is an ideal way of introducing them to the idea of competing. The details can be found on the planetstamp.co.uk website under Rocket News/Competitions.

It is essentially a 1 page competition with the children selecting any topic they want – as long as they use only GB material – stamps, cancels, etc .

There are 3 age groups with prizes for each group, sponsored by Stanley Gibbons.

Youth Philately – You CAN help


Stamp Active Network has just issued a new brochure on Stamp Collecting for Young People. It sets out the range of activities with which we are involved and the ways in which we seek to promote the hobby among young collectors. We could, however, do much more if we could enlist greater support, and page 3 of the brochure suggests some of the ways in which all collectors could get involved.

Obviously direct help with either running school/youth stamp clubs is an ideal way, and greatly appreciated, for those who can dedicate their time and efforts. If you regularly attend national or regional philatelic events, where there is a Stamp Active/ Kids Corner, offers of help to assist in manning the stand for a couple of hours would ease the load on our small band of dedicated helpers.

Stamps in Schools, an independent project run by Erene Grieve and sponsored by the BPMA, organises workshops in schools to get children interested with a view to getting school clubs started. Erene travels all round the country and would welcome local support from clubs or individuals in the areas she visits. If you want to know more, please ask for details.

If direct contact with young collectors is not for you, there are still ways that you can help. All collectors at some time accumulate material that they do not need. Why not have a clear out and donate this unwanted material to Stamp Active. At Kidstamps, our postal club, we are always needing thematic material and first day covers to keep our members interested, but if that is not the kind of material that you have, then maybe it would be suitable for auction to raise funds.

If you cannot tick any of the above boxes then maybe you could become a "Friend of Stamp Active". With a suggested annual donation of £20 you could play your part in keeping the hobby alive for future generations. This option applies not only to individual collectors but also to societies who may wish to contribute to the cause. So why not discuss this with your fellow club members, or raise it with your committee or at your AGM.

Look out for the brochure at stamp events, or ask for a copy from Stamp Active, PO Box 477, Hounslow, Middlesex, TW3 9HD (with A5 stamped addressed envelope) and start making your contribution to the future of the hobby. 

HANDSTAMP SPECIAL

Handstamps reprinted on these pages first appeared in the "British Postmark Bulletin".

For a free sample copy, write to:

The Editor, Postmark Bulletin, Royal Mail, 35 – 50 Rathbone Place, London, W1T 1HQ



BOOK REVIEW

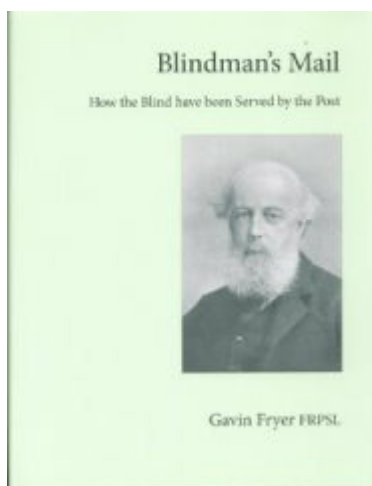
Gavin Fryer FRPSL

Blindman's Mail

Published by the author, 2010.

165 pp. ISBN 978 0 9529178 1 6

The dust jacket has an illustration on the front of Dr Thomas Rhodes Armitage who was the founder of the organisation that became the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB).



Richard Brewster, the Vice-President of the RNIB, writes the Foreword, ending with the sentence “Gavin Fryer’s meticulous research has preserved a unique and important aspect of social history for future generations.”

Part I provides an outline of the efforts of individuals and organisations that have helped the blind. Louis Braille’s important role in the development of a system of symbols that can be taught to blind people is written up in detail. There is also a sub-chapter on the establishment and development of the RNIB.

Part II deals in depth with efforts to obtain postal concessions for blind people. Various Post Office Regulations, Acts of Parliament and UPU Circulars are quoted, some in full. The extent of Gavin Fryer’s research is demonstrated in Part III

where postal rates for the blind are outlined for countries worldwide. There are over 80 illustrations of postal items sent to, or by, blind persons. Part IV lists over 30 well-known blind persons, from Samson (1120 BC) to the MP David Blunkett (1947 -).

The author found that the RNIB had retained very little documentation of the struggle to obtain postal concessions. The majority of his research was carried out at the British Postal Museum & Archive (BPMA). Whilst the book would prove a useful point of reference for anybody forming a collection on the theme of blindness, I suggest the book is of greater interest to the Postal Historian.

Brian Sole FRPSL

And a few Braille stamps for thematic collectors:





JUST4KIDS

By Lise Whittle



THE RIGHT ROYAL FAMILY

To tie in with the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, lets take another look at making a Right Royal Stamp Collection!

Did you know our Queen owns one of the best stamp collections in the world? Do you fancy having a Right Royal Stamp Collection of your own? Well, how about trying to find a stamp from the reign of each King or Queen ever since stamps were invented? Give it a try.



QUEEN VICTORIA. Good old Queen Vic fancied seeing herself every time she received a letter, so she had her portrait on the first ever stamp, way back in 1840. The stamp was known as The Penny Black because, er, it cost one old Penny (1d), and it was Black! So it would be a good idea to start your Right Royal Stamp Collection with a stamp showing Queen Victoria. (By the way, most Penny Black Stamps are quite expensive to buy now, but there are lots of other far less expensive Victorian stamps you could collect.)



EDWARD VII (7th). When Queen Vic died in 1901 she was aged 82 and she'd been Queen for 64 years! Her eldest son, Edward, was already 60 when he became king next. Edward and young brother Alfred were the first royal stamp collectors.



GEORGE V (5th). When Edward snuffed it, his son George became king, and he was given his father's stamp collection. Now this George was totally potty about stamps. Yes, he loved them, spent hours looking at his albums and arranging his stamps. And because he was so rich, he could afford to buy lots of very expensive stamps, and he had one of the best collections in the world. In fact, in 1904 he set a new world record when he bought a Two Penny Blue stamp from Mauritius for £1,450. No one had ever spent that much on one stamp before!





EDWARD VIII (8th). When George died, his eldest son Edward became King Edward VIII (8th), but he was never crowned. When he announced that he wanted to marry a divorced woman, the Government told him that he would have to abdicate - that means, give up becoming king. He had to choose, the woman he loved or the throne? No problem, he chose the woman! However, stamps had already been made with Edward's head on them, so you can include him in your Right Royal Collection as 'The King Who Was Never Crowned !'



GEORGE VI (6th). When Edward abdicated, his brother George became king instead. He hadn't expected to become king, and was a bit unsure at first, but he became a good and popular king. During his reign the Second World War broke out, and he was popular because he stayed living in London during the bombing raids rather than moving away to somewhere safer, and the people thought he was brave. The palace even got partly bombed in one raid!



ELIZABETH II (2nd) (Elizabeth 1st of Scotland). George also collected stamps, and when he popped his clogs and died in 1952, he left all his stamps to his daughter, our Queen Elizabeth, and she still has them. In fact, she has an extremely valuable letter with a block of 10 Penny Black stamps dated on the very first day stamps were used (6th May 1840), the largest number of Penny Blacks on one letter on that first day anywhere in the world!



So now your Right Royal Collection is up to date, but you can add to it further by finding stamps of Queen Elizabeth's children - Charles, Anne, Andrew and Edward, and their children.



*If you would like to win a set of Royal stamps, answer this question -
Who will be the next King or Queen after Queen Elizabeth?*

WRITE TO US!

Send your answer, jokes, poems, drawings and letters with your name and address to: Just4Kids, c/o The Editor, Themescene, 87 Victoria Road, Bournemouth, BH1 4RS

LIBRARY LISTING

If you would like to receive a list of articles on your topic(s), send a stamped sae to the Librarian (contact details inside front cover). To assist, he will quote the current postal rates when he sends the list.

If you are interested in borrowing any articles then give him a ring and he will advise how to proceed.

Members asking to borrow books and catalogues are not required to pay the cost of outward posting, only the return cost.

Animals

- | | | | |
|---|------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 2 | Van der Valk, L. | The Stamping of Hooves | Stamp Magazine 7/1978 |
| 2 | | Rinderpest | Medi Theme 2/2011 |

Artists

- | | | | |
|---|--------------|------------------------------|------------------|
| 3 | De Klerk, M. | Rembrandt His Life And Works | ThemNews 11/2010 |
| 3 | Whittle, C. | Smallest of the Wild Cats | ThemNews 2/2011 |

Agriculture

- | | | | |
|---|---------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | Fox, A. | New Zealand's Vintage Farm Transport | Stamp Magazine 8/1976 |
|---|---------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|

Architecture

- | | | | |
|---|-------------|---|---------------------|
| 6 | Yandell, L. | German Church Architecture in the Middle Ages | Gabriel 2010 - 2011 |
|---|-------------|---|---------------------|

Cycling

- | | | | |
|---|------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | Boyden, C. | Cycling on stamps | Stamp Magazine 8/1978 |
|---|------------|-------------------|-----------------------|

Entertainment

- | | | | |
|---|-------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 5 | Dugdale, J. | Bright Lights of Broadway | Stamp Magazine 3/2011 |
| 6 | Dugdale, J. | Great American Movie Directors | Topical Times 2/2011 |
| 4 | Shuker, J. | Rebel without a pause (James Dean) | Stamp Magazine 2/2011 |

Famous people

- | | | | |
|---|------------------|---|-----------------------|
| 4 | Yalamanchiti, K. | Stars of India (Britons on Indian stamps) | Stamp Magazine 1/2011 |
|---|------------------|---|-----------------------|

Mathematics

- | | | | |
|---|------------|---|--------------|
| 6 | Techno, D. | Bernard Riemann (mathematician-all in German) | Thema 1/2011 |
|---|------------|---|--------------|

Medicine/Diseases

- | | | | |
|---|--|------------|-------------------|
| 2 | | Rinderpest | Medi Theme 2/2011 |
|---|--|------------|-------------------|

Peace

- | | | | |
|---|------------|----------------------|------------|
| 2 | Morris, M. | In the Name of Peace | Stamp News |
|---|------------|----------------------|------------|

Philatelic exhibitions

- 3 Williams, N. The First Stamp Exhibition Stamp Magazine 10/1978

Printing

- 4 Ellis, H. Stamps and Printing Stamp Magazine 9/1976

Transport

- 3 Trott, N. South African Railways ThemNews 11/2010
3 Last, B. Ships from the Cocos (Keeling) Islands Stamp Magazine 10/1976

Space

- 5 Dugdale, J. The High Life Stamp Magazine 12/2010

Telecommunications

- 7 Beennem, J. From Magnet to Multi-Media Orbit 3/2011
(Telecommunications)

UNESCO

- 5 Kepell, A. Cultural diversity Stamp Magazine 2/2011

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BTA FUN WITH PHILATELY WEEKEND

Friday 5th to Sunday 7th October 2012

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COST

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Day Delegate

Saturday £10.00

Sunday £5.00

All Delegates

Saturday and/or Sunday lunch Optional extra

Day delegates

Saturday dinner Optional extra

TRAVEL

By car: the hotel is easily reached from the A40 to the north, or the M4 to the south. The hotel has free parking.

By train: we are hoping to arrange transport from Didcot or Oxford stations.

LOCAL ATTRACTIONS

The City of Oxford is easily reached either by bus from the end of the hotel drive, or in good weather by walking along the tow-path. Oxford offers so much, including its colleges, botanical gardens, the Ashmolean Museum, theatres and shops (see its web site www.visitoxfordandoxfordshire.com)

BTA FUN WITH PHILATELY WEEKEND

Friday 5th to Sunday 7th October 2012

Oxford Spires Four Pillars Hotel

Abingdon Road, Oxford, OX1 4PS

<http://oxford-spires-hotel.four-pillars.co.uk>

PROGRAMME

Friday

- p.m. Arrival and welcome
18.45 Members displays
19.30 Dinner followed by speaker Richard Wheeler with "Puppetry" and a little magic

Saturday

- Breakfast
09.30 Speaker Ron Backhouse with "Anyone for Tennis?"
Coffee
11.00 Members displays
(Lunch not provided. Hotel has restaurant, lounge and bar, or spend some time in Oxford)

Thematic dealer David Griffiths "Thames Themes" will be in attendance

The BTA will have a table sale offering a wide variety of stamps, covers, meter marks etc.

- 16.00 Tea and Question and Answer session
19.45 Dinner, raffle, and a light-hearted quiz for collectors and partners

Sunday

- Breakfast
09.30 Speaker Grace Davies with "Symbols of Peace"
10.30 Speaker Peter Weir with "Liquid of Life"
Coffee
11.30 Members displays
12.45 Lunch (optional, payable on the day).

Please bring up to 2 frames (24 sheets) of your collection with you ready to display and talk very briefly. The Friday session will be 'gunshot displays' - a minute each and as many displays as possible.

A contribution to the raffle would be much appreciated (philatelic or non-philatelic).

BTA FUN WITH PHILATELY WEEKEND
Friday 5th to Sunday 7th October 2012
Oxford Spires Four Pillars Hotel
BOOKING FORM

I wish to book

- Rooms based on two people sharing £190 per head
- Single room supplement £50 per head
- Extra bed/breakfast Thursday Extra bed/breakfast Sunday
(cost to be confirmed)

Or

- Day delegate Saturday £10 per head
- Day delegate Sunday £5 per head

Deposit

£25.00 per person (non-refundable)

Or

Day delegate rate per person

I enclose a cheque for made out to BRITISH THEMATIC ASSOCIATION

Your details

Name.....

Name of partner.....

Address.....

..... Postcode.....

Telephone number (home)

Telephone number (mobile)

Email.....

Acknowledgement of booking will be sent by email where possible

Please send this form (or a photocopy) plus deposit, to:

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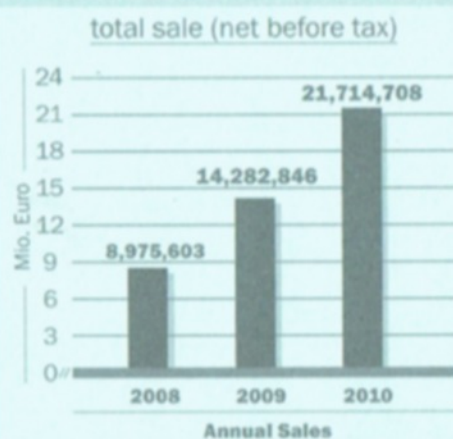
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REVIEW

facts and figures you can rely on



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